

Downtown Providence District Management Authority

Board Meeting

September 8, 2005

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. Directors present included Evan Granoff, Robert Gagliardi, Richard Lappin, Christopher Placco, Maria Ruggieri, Stanley Weiss. Directors Joseph Paolino, Sr. and Judith Cullen were absent. Ex-officio Directors present included Diana Burdett, Arnold B. Chace, Jr., Michael Corso, Joseph DiBattista, Joshua Miller, and Jerry Sansiveri

Providence Foundation staff present included Daniel Bauduoin, Executive Director and Joelle Crane, Program Manager. Also present were Urban Place Consulting employees Steve Gibson, consultant; Frank LaTorre, Director of Public Space; Leslie Schwartz, Office Manager. Block-by-Block staff present included Frank Zammarelli, Operations Manager.

2. Approval of Minutes of the August 4, 2005 meeting

Director Granoff recommended a revision to the top of page 2 to clarify that the Board intends to contract for audits for 4 fiscal years ending in June 2008. A motion was made by Director Gagliardi to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2005 Public Hearing. The

motion was seconded by Director Chace and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Director Chace Yes

Director Gagliardi Yes

Director Granoff Yes

Director Lappin Yes

Director Placco Yes

Director Ruggieri Yes

Director Weiss Yes

Therefore, the motion passed.

3. Financial Report

Steve Gibson of Urban Place Consulting stated his commitment to e-mailing financial reports to the Board members as soon as possible after the month-end reporting is completed. The “prepaid assessment” line item in the “other assets” section of the balance sheet was discussed. Steve Gibson agreed to work with Leslie, the new Office Manager, to determine where these funds should be re-distributed given the new fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005. A corrective general journal entry will be made prior to the next Board meeting. Jerry Sansiveri stated that we should be operating with 100% accrual- based accounting procedures.

The Board discussed the importance of separating the taxable from the non-taxable assessment revenue. Previously, all assessments were posted to the taxable line item. Leslie has already started

distinguishing between the two categories in lockbox deposits and will revise previous entries to reflect the distinction prior to the next Board meeting.

The list of unpaid assessments was circulated to determine if any Board members had more current information on the accounts. The Board discussed continuing to circulate the list of receivables at each board meeting so that they can actively assist in getting assessments paid. Director Gagliardi and Michael Corso stated that they could be identify contact persons on multiple parcels and will contact Leslie individually with information. The list that was circulated included the tax exempt owners who had not yet committed to pay, which inflated the amount of assessment revenue that is outstanding. The Board requested a revised list that included only the Taxable properties to be sent out by e-mail today.

The Board discussed the importance of having a set policy for late payments that is uniform and enforced. Directors Granoff and Weiss emphasized the importance of letters out immediately to those who have not paid. Director Granoff suggested that our policy for collection be the same as the City's, and Michael Corso agreed. Leslie Schwartz and Frank LaTorre will obtain a copy of the City's collection procedure and meet with the Tax Collector as soon as possible to determine how DPDMA can partner with them to improve the accuracy of DPDMA's owner information and determine methods to better pursue payment of past-due assessments. Michael Corso

suggested that DPDMA needs to be added to the Municipal Lien Certificate. Dan Baudouin suggested communicating with Title attorneys to make sure they know to inquire about any out-standing assessments. Director Ruggieri recommended putting the collection policy in the newsletter as soon as we have it and calling owners with out-standing invoices in addition to a mailing.

The Board would like to have the DID staff complete the following tasks for the October 2005 meeting: create an amended budget, movement towards 100% accrual-based accounting, categorize assessment revenue as taxable or tax-exempt, adjust pre-paid assessment from last year to appropriate line item, make a recommendation for internal collection procedure including specific tasks assigned to individuals and timelines, send a notice to Title companies and the RI Bar Association regarding our assessment, submit a report on the meeting with the City Tax Assessor.

4. Marketing Report

Joelle Crane, Program Manager at the Providence Foundation, distributed a packet with pricing and placement information for the DPDMA Marketing Committee's proposed signage program. The program as proposed will include both vinyl and metal signs with the DID logo to be placed within the District both on light poles and window displays. Joelle stated that there are many details to address in terms of dimensions, materials, and installment, and that the Marketing Committee is at this time requesting permission from the

Board to move forward with this project at a budget not to exceed \$10,000.

This request of the Board prompted two Board requests. Director Weiss requested a comprehensive Special Project “wish list,” stating that the Board could make more informed decisions about program priorities. Lappin requested a pro-forma budget forecast that quantifies how special projects funds have been spent so far so that information is available to the Board when they are asked to make decisions about current and future spending proposals. Steve Gibson responded that current Special Project expenditures are at approximately \$30,000 and clarified that this amount is separate from the \$45,000 reserve that is in the budget. It is also estimated that the DPDMA will be collecting significant unanticipated funds as a result of new assessments that were not in the original budget.

The Board discussed the lack of a budget line item for marketing projects and related expenses. Dan Baudouin stated that there are some grant funds allocated toward DID marketing; expenditures for signs were not part of the budget. Mr. Baudouin reminded the Board that at last month’s meeting the Board directed the staff to develop this proposal. There was general agreement that this should be considered for next year’s budget.

A motion was made by Director Chace, Jr. to approve allocation of \$10,000 maximum to move forward with the Marketing Committee’s

proposal. The motion was seconded by Director Gagliardi and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Director Chace Yes

Director Gagliardi Yes

Director Granoff Yes

Director Lappin Yes

Director Placco Yes

Director Ruggieri Yes

Director Weiss Yes

Therefore, the motion passed.

Joelle Crane reported the following announcements to the Board: On September 19, 2005, there will be a Retail Recruitment Breakfast in Downtown Providence. The Mayor will be speaking at the breakfast, followed by an open house of available retail space. At this time, 15 potential retailers are expected to attend. Also, September 11, 2005 is National Neighborhood Day and includes a 1.5 hour walking tour, ending at L'Epicurio Restaurant.

Joelle is working on updating the walking map for another printing and is working on the fall newsletter.

Director Ruggieri recommended the use of interns for special projects such as compiling an owner e-mail distribution list.

5. Acquisition of Trash Barrels

Frank LaTorre, Director of Public Space, gave a brief outline of the need for trash barrels in the Downtown area, stating that we have only a third of what would reasonable manage the trash in an area the size of Downtown Providence. Frank distributed a packet of information on the pricing and specs for trash barrels to be purchased for use within the District. Companies included American Titan Corp., Landscape Forms, The Steel Yard, and Victor Stanley, Inc.

The Board discussed the merits of aluminum vs. steel construction in terms of weight for stability, maintenance and long-term use. It was agreed upon that there are merits to both, and that there is no decisive information about long-term performance.

The Board discussed whether or not to buy a model with lids. Steve Gibson advised against lids, as they create maintenance costs by needing to be cleaned very frequently and needing the hinges repaired due to high usage. Many business owners commented that they prefer lids so that trash is better contained and not visible.

The Board decided to try using lids and monitor the expenses incurred.

Director Chace, Jr. stated that he strongly recommends using the Steel Yard, as it would patronize a local small business. Frank stated that he has had made it clear to his contact at The Steel Yard that we will not compromise on quality of the product for the sake of

patronizing a local business. The Steel Yard would sub-contract for the steel fabrication. As the Steel Yard barrels will be custom-made, there is no sample available, and the large set-up fee is prohibitive to getting a sample. Director Chace, Jr. commented that if there are design issues that need to be changed, a local company who is customizing them to our needs is better able to adapt the product to meet our needs.

Director Weiss recommended that Two Ton, Inc. of Pawtucket review the specifications.

Director Granoff is concerned about the materials and construction and would like Frank LaTorre to do more research before making a purchasing decision.

A motion was made by Director Chace, Jr. to move forward with the purchase of the first increment of 30 barrels from the Steel Yard and testing them on the streets before placing subsequent orders. The motion was seconded by Director Placco, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Director Chace Yes

Director Gagliardi Yes

Director Granoff No

Director Lappin Yes

Director Placco Yes

Director Ruggieri Yes

Director Weiss No

Therefore, the motion passed.

6. Schedule Operations Committee Meeting

Director Gagliardi suggested a meeting be set for 9 a.m. on September 20th at 40 Fountain Street, and the Board agreed.

7. Report from Block-By-Block

Frank Zammarelli, Operations Manager for Block-by-Block, distributed a handout listing the activity for Clean and Safety Teams for August. The numbers are consistent with last month's, with the exception of a slight increase in passive panhandling. (See attached sheet.) Projects in August focused on painting electrical boxes, weed eradication, and sidewalk pressure-washing. 4 new team members will begin work next week. DID staff members are still awaiting training for the Act-Track software that will be used to track to jobs completed by Block-By-Block. Dan Baudouin suggested that the up-coming newsletter could highlight this new software.

There is significant concern about the activity at Kennedy Plaza at approximately 3:45p.m., the time when school dismisses in the afternoon. It was agreed upon that this is a public safety issue and needs addressing. It will be discussed when Frank LaTorre, Dan Baudouin, Steve Gibson and Board members meet with the Mayor this afternoon. Directors Lappin and Ruggieri recommended that

DPDMA meet with RIPTA, Police and the Schools to help facilitate a plan to address the issue.

8. Report from Urban Place Consulting & Director of Public Space: On-going issues

Steve Gibson of Urban Place Consulting committed to have a matrix of Frank LaTorre's on-going projects for the Board at the next meeting. Several present expressed gratitude for Frank's efforts.

9. Other Business

Michael Corso noted that tonight starts the "busy" season downtown with university students having returned and many evening activities taking place. Frank Zammarelli noted that we have re-deployed the safety team members to be visible later into the evenings on high-traffic evenings. Director Weiss added that the Hotel Providence has hired a police detail for 11p.m.-3a.m.

Michael Corso proposed that we develop a strategy for the community bulletin board project for public notices or community events. The strategy would include pricing information and potentially a design competition. Director Lappin seconded the motion. A vote was taken and those present were unanimously in favor, and therefore, the motion passed.

Director Ruggieri announced that the direction of Eddy Street changed again earlier this week.

Director Lappin inquired about the snow removal plan and noted that we need to be clear with owners about our expectations. It was suggested that there be an article in the newsletter explaining the plan. Frank LaTorre responded that this will be addressed at the up-coming Operations Committee meeting. A proposal will be brought to the next Board meeting.

Joe DiBattista requested a sidewalk update. Dan Baudouin reported that Public Works, the City Planning Department, and the State DOT are working with a DID-led committee to create a plan and to access state ADA resources. A landscape architect will donate some consultation services. This item is also on the list to discuss with the Mayor this afternoon. The DID appreciates the opportunity to coordinate this effort to help ensure that the funds are used downtown.

Director Placco suggested that we move the monthly meeting to the third Thursday of the month to allow for completion and distribution of month-end reports with adequate time to review the documents prior to the meeting. The Board agreed. Director Granoff suggested adjusting the meeting time to begin at 8:30 a.m., so that it gives people more flexibility with their morning schedule. The Board agreed. These changes will take affect beginning in October with the remaining meeting schedule as follows:

Thursday, October 20, 2005 at 8:30 a.m.

Thursday, November 17, 2005 at 8:30 a.m.

Thursday, December 15, 2005 at 8:30 a.m.

10. Adjournment

A motion was made by Director Gagliardi to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Director Placco, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Director Chace Yes

Director Gagliardi Yes

Director Granoff Yes

Director Lappin Yes

Director Placco Yes

Director Ruggieri Yes

Director Weiss Yes

Therefore, the motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Schwartz

DID Office Manager